



CITY OF DANBURY OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Livable Neighborhoods 2013 *“Building a Better Danbury”*

August 2013

August 26, 2013

Honorable Mayor Boughton and City Council Members:

Below is a table highlighting UNIT activity from the time of last month’s City Council report. This does not include any UNIT activity regarding follow up and re-inspection work from previously noted issues. The UNIT works to ensure that each and every issue is resolved as quickly as possible.

Time Period	July 29 – August 26, 2013
Number of Quality of Life Issues	82
Year to Date	633

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Blight/Miscellaneous (35)
- Properties with debris on it (19)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (10)
- Abandoned/foreclosed houses (5)
- Exterior Blight Order (4)

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS:

57 Deer Hill Ave update

Everyone knows about the house on Deer Hill at the corner of Wilson Street. Council people have received complaints, the Mayor’s office, the News Times and the Patch have written articles, and needless to say, our department has received the brunt of these complaints and for good reason. The neighbors are fed up with having to look at the

condition of this house continually worsen. The house was purchased years ago in the hopes of being restored and resold. Unfortunately, the economy worsened and the house and property fell into disrepair. While, in the past, the UNIT had been able to work with the property owner to do minor improvements, such as mow the lawn or have the sidewalk cleared of snow, nothing substantial was ever accomplished.....until now. With the enhancement of the Exterior Blight Order 10-99 through 10-106 that the City Council approved a few months back, UNIT member Rich Antous, sent an order to the property owner requiring for the property to be significantly improved. Grass to be mowed, house secured, trees/saplings cut back, exterminate any rodent harborage, etc. Initial response was poor and the order required compliance within 30 days or \$100/day fine would be issued. Thirty days came and went without any work being done, and Rich was determined to improve the conditions at this property. In the meantime, the \$100 daily fine had begun and near the end of July, the property was still not in compliance and the owner was facing a fine of almost \$5000! Finally, after an appeal hearing, it was determined to uphold the Blight Order and set the fine total at \$3900. The property owner had one week to comply to the order and a portion of his expenses towards the improvements could be counted toward the fine.

As a result of Rich's effort and commitment to overseeing this long drawn out process, the eye sore on Deer Hill Ave has been significantly improved, thank you Rich!

Exterior Blight Citation Warnings Issued:

In July, the UNIT issued five (4) Exterior Blight Warnings to property owners. In this case, thirty days are allowed for the property owner to remediate the issues highlighted on the citation warning. If compliance isn't achieved during this time frame, then our department goes to the next step of issuing daily fines of \$100/day until the issues have been resolved.

Below is a review of the warnings sent:

- **59 Sheridan Street:** Vacant property where it is not being maintained. The grass is over 4' high and the property is not secure as the rear and side doors have been left open.
- **7 Olive Street:** This property is a piece of land that has been for sale for the last few years. It is between two other homes and has not been maintained. The grass is never mowed and is frustrating to the adjoining property owners. The order required for the property to be mowed and regularly maintained throughout.
- **54 Kenosia Avenue:** An order was sent to the property owner as a result of this vacant home not being maintained. The grass and weeds are very high and beginning to grow up over the house. There are unregistered vehicles that have been left on the property, and finally there is a small amount of rubbish around the property. In the past, the UNIT has spoken to the owner about maintaining the property, but it has not been done in a timely manner, thus, the order was sent.

- **28 Mountain Road:** The UNIT sent an order to the property owner as a result of an accumulation of rubbish/stored materials in the driveway. Everything is covered with tarps and has been so for years. Not only is it blight, but it's also an unsafe condition as access to/from the house is impaired due to limited accessibility as a result of the accumulation. Additionally, the front porch also needs to be cleared of the rubbish as well.

Naturally, our department will follow up on all of these issues and more to ensure that compliance is met and that the quality of life in our neighborhoods are restored and maintained.

311 Call Center Report: June 2013

The month of June saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 630 calls, with requests for phone numbers bringing the highest total at 136 inquiries. The spring yard debris pickup program, and its subsequent conclusion, brought 34 calls while 26 residents called for information on the recycling truck, and its new location at the War Memorial. Twenty-two residents called asking where they can dispose of household garbage while 13 additional calls were placed regarding Household Hazardous Waste Day (September 28 in Danbury) and 11 residents called looking for information on upcoming summer events. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and proactive in reporting overgrown trees and bushes that may be considered a potential road hazard. Summer is typically a busy time for road repairs, drainage work, and other large-scale projects; by keeping in close contact with respective city departments, the 311 Call Center is well-prepared to provide the most accurate information available for residents seeking updates and information.

The UNIT continues to encourage the participation of Danbury's residents to report any concerns in their neighborhood by utilizing the City Line 311 system. Residents of Danbury can simply dial 311 from their home phones, or 203-744-4311 from out of town or cell phones. Additionally, residents can log on to the City's webpage, www.ci.danbury.ct.us, and click on the City Line 311 link and register their complaint at their convenience, and now, residents can utilize the Danbury Direct app from their iPhone to submit a concern or question. Residents can choose to provide their contact information, so the UNIT can follow up and provide an update on the situation. By visiting the Neighborhood Assistance Department on the City's website, residents will also be able to view the UNIT's monthly activity.

If we can be of any assistance to you or residents in your ward please contact us at 796-8026 or 311.

Sincerely,

Shawn Stillman
Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Assistance